



## Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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May 17, 2004

Representative Steven M. Costantino, Chairperson  
House Finance Committee  
The State House, Room 35  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Rep. Steven M. Costantino, Chairperson:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Commissioners and staff support Representative Eileen Naughton's Medicaid Buy-In bill, HB 7518 or known as "The Sherlock Act". This is a significant incentive for people with disabilities to get off the public income program. This is indeed a win-win situation for everyone.

By passing the HB 7518, these people who obtain medical coverage via the "Medicaid Buy-In" program would be able to earn more money because of their high skills in their job. They would also build more self-sufficiency, would go toward independence, would boost more self-esteem, and most importantly, would gain more freedom. In return, the employers are able to hire more people with disabilities with affordable premiums, and also, the people with disabilities would be able to pay back the taxes to the State of Rhode Island.

Why do people with disabilities have to make the choice between work and health? Medicaid Buy-In is what we call, INVESTMENT in people with disabilities, that they can have both, work and health, privileges. This would give people with disabilities equal employment participation like everyone else.

Once again, we support the "The Sherlock Act"(HB 7518).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "S.A. Florio".

Steven A. Florio  
Executive Director